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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Eight charged for possessing, distributing ecstasy in Minnesota

Eight individuals were recently charged in federal court on possession and distribution charges of the semisynthetic psychedelic drug MDMA, commonly known as ecstasy.

Five people were charged in a single indictment that was unsealed Dec. 21 in connection with a conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute MDMA/ecstasy.

Vong Voraveth, 27, Minnetonka, was charged with one count of conspiracy and six counts of distribution of ecstasy. Pradith Syhaphom, 26, Burnsville, was charged with one count of conspiracy, one count of distribution of ecstasy, and one count of possession with intent to distribute ecstasy. Soukseum Inthickack, 29, Brooklyn Park, was charged with one count of conspiracy and one count of possession with intent to distribute ecstasy. Minh Tran, 35, Eagan, was charged with one count of conspiracy and one count of distribution of ecstasy. Athit Syhaphom, 23, Richfield was charged with one count of conspiracy and one count of possession with intent to distribute ecstasy.

The indictment alleges that the five defendants from Jan. 1, 2007 through Nov. 8, 2007, did conspire with each other to distribute and possess with intent to distribute 50,000 tablets, weighing 12,500 grams, of ecstasy. The indictment also alleges that Voraveth knowingly distributed approximately 2,000 tablets (500 grams) of ecstasy on Aug. 9, 2007, that he knowingly distributed approximately 1,000 tablets (250 grams) of ecstasy on Aug. 26, 2007, and that he knowingly distributed approximately 2,000 tablets (500 grams) of ecstasy on Sept. 25, 2007.

The indictment alleges that Voraveth and Pradith Syhaphom knowingly distributed approximately 1,000 tablets (250 grams) of ecstasy on Oct. 10, 2007, and that Voraveth and Tran knowingly distributed approximately 5,000 (1,250 grams) tablets of ecstasy on Sept. 27, 2007. Also on Sept. 27, Inthickack knowingly possessed with intent to distribute approximately 5,000 tablets of ecstasy.

Then on Oct. 11, 2007, the indictment alleges that Voraveth, Pradith Syhaphom and Athit Syhaphom knowingly possessed with the intent to distribute approximately 5,000 tablets of ecstasy.

If convicted, each defendant faces a potential maximum sentence of 20 years in prison on the conspiracy count; 20 years on each distribution count; and 20 years on each possess with intent to distribute count. All sentences are determined by a federal district court judge.

This case is the result of an investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Christian S. Wilton.

Outhay Siharath, 30, Shakopee, and Detvisay Nui Sorthepharack, 25, Bloomington, were each charged Dec. 20 via criminal complaint with one count of conspiracy to distribute 20,000 pills of MDMA/ecstasy.

According to an affidavit filed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, officers conducted a “controlled buy” of 500 ecstasy pills from Siharath in a Shakopee parking lot in October 2007. On Dec. 17, 2007, Siharath and Sorthepharack were arrested in a parking lot outside of the Mall of America attempting to sell 20,000 pills of ecstasy for \$70,000.

During the investigation, officers learned about a threat against a St. Paul Police officer. Police discovered that Siharath talked about “getting rid of” the officer in order to protect their illegal drug business, and police recovered a photograph of the specific officer in Siharath’s vehicle.

If convicted, Siharath and Sorthepharack each face a potential maximum penalty of 20 years in prison. All sentences are determined by a federal district court judge. This case is the result of an investigation by the FBI and the Minneapolis Police Department, and is also being prosecuted by Wilton.

In a separate indictment, Pierre Tchou Yang, 20, Fridley, was charged in November with one count of possession with intent to distribute ecstasy. Yang’s indictment alleges that on Oct. 19, 2007, he knowingly and intentionally possessed with the intent to distribute approximately 2,000 tablets, weighing about 500 grams, of the drug.

According to an affidavit filed by the FBI, witnesses observed individuals in a white Toyota Scion begin shooting at another vehicle near the intersection of University and Western avenues in St. Paul. Police learned that the vehicle belonged to Yang, set up surveillance at Yang’s Fridley residence and observed four individuals get out of the vehicle and enter the home.

After a couple of minutes, all four individuals came out of the house and got back into the vehicle. Officers approached the vehicle and told the occupants to remain in the vehicle. Instead, Yang put the vehicle in reverse and began to exit the driveway at a high rate of speed. The vehicle struck a parked vehicle in the street and sped away.

Officers stopped the vehicle approximately one block from the house and arrested all four individuals. During a search warrant of Yang’s residence, police recovered a .40-caliber semiautomatic handgun and approximately 2,000 pills of ecstasy, along with numerous items of gang indicia.

If convicted, Yang faces a potential maximum penalty of 20 years in prison and a \$1 million fine. All sentences are determined by a federal district court judge. This case is the result of an

investigation by the FBI, and is also being prosecuted by Wilton.

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An indictment is a determination by a grand jury that there is probable cause to believe that offenses have been committed by the defendant. The defendant, of course, is presumed innocent until he or she pleads guilty or is proven guilty at trial.